

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY OSLO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9625

INFO AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

USMISSION NATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L OSLO 1681

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PINT, NO

SUBJECT: NORWEGIAN LABOR PARTY NAMES PARTY LEADERSHIP

SUMMARY: THE NATIONAL CONVENTION OF NORWAY'S  
MINORITY LABOR PARTY NAMED VICE CHAIRMAN REIULF STEEN TO  
BE NEW PARTY CHAIRMAN, REPLACING TRYGVE BRATTELI.  
IT NAMED MRS. GRO HARLEM BRUNDTLAND AS VICE CHAIRMAN  
AND IVAR LEVERAAS AS SECRETARY GENERAL AS WELL AS NEW  
CENTRAL AND NATIONAL COMMITTEES. THE CHOICE WAS A  
COMPROMISE BETWEEN CONTENDING GROUPS SUPPORTING STEEN  
AND PARTY PARLIAMENTARY LEADER ODVAR NORDLI, WHO WAS  
IN EXCHANGE PROMISED SUPPORT AS PRIME MINISTER WHEN BRATTELI  
STEPS DOWN FROM THE POST. THE OFFER TO NORDLI  
AND ELECTION OF AMODERATE CENTRAL COMMITTEE WILL CHECK THE MORE  
RADICAL FORCES WHICH BACK STEEN. MORE DETAILED ANALYSIS  
OF CONVENTION'S IMPLICATIONS FOLLOWS BY SEPTTEL.  
END SUMMARY

1. IN FINAL DAY OF ITS NATIONAL CONVENTION APRIL 20-24

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NORWEGIAN LABOR PARTY NAMED ITS PRESENT VICE CHAIRMAN

REIULF STEEN TO REPLACE AS PARTY CHAIRMAN TYGVE BRATTELI WHO HAD EARLIER ANNOUNCED HIS DESIRE TO LEAVE THE PARTY POST. CONVENTION NAMED MRS. GRO HARLEM BRUNDTLAND, PRESENT ENVIRONMENT MINISTER, AS NEW PARTY VICE CHAIRMAN AND IVAR LEVERAAS, ACTING DIRECTOR OF THE PARTY'S WORKER'S EDUCATION ASSOCIATION, AS SECRETARY GENERAL. ADDITIONALLY, CONVENTION SELECTED TEN MEMBERS AND EIGHT ALTERNATES OF CENTRAL COMMITTEE AND 22 MEMBER NATIONAL COMMITTEE.

2. CONVENTION'S DECISION CAME AFTER LONG AND SERIOUS COMPETITION BETWEEN STEEN AND PARTY PARLIAMENTARY LEADER ODVAR NORDLI IN WHICH STEEN IS PORTRAYED AS THE LEADER WHO WOULD TAKE THE PARTY ALONG A SOMEWHAT MORE RADICAL SOCIALIST COURSE WHILE NORDLI WOULD STEER MORE TOWARD THE MIDDLE OF NORWEGIAN SOCIETY.

3. RESULT IS A COMPROMISE WITH STEEN BEING BALANCED BY AN ASSURANCE TO NORDLI THAT HE WILL SUCCEED BRATTELI AS PRIME MINISTER AND THE ELECTION OF THE POPULAR MRS. BRUNDTLAND AND LEVERAAS AND A MODERATE CENTRAL COMMITTEE. THE COMMITTEE INCLUDES BRATTELI, NORDLI, TRADE UNION FEDERATION PRESIDENT TOR ASPENGREN, CHURCH AND EDUCATION MINISTER BJARTMAR GJERDE, STORTINGSMAN INGEVAR BAKKEN, PROVINCIAL PARTY CHAIRMAN GRETE JOHANSEN, IRON AND METAL UNION DEPUTY CHAIRMAN LARS M. SKYTEN, EDUCATION MINISTRY OFFICIAL INGRID EIDA, SEAMAN'S UNION PRESIDENT HENRIK AASAROD AND OSLO PARTY VICE CHAIRMAN TURID DANKERTSEN.

4. COMPROMISE WAS ARRANGED WITH STEEN AND NORDLI WHEN IT BECAME CLEAR THAT NORDLI'S SUPPORT IN THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE WOULD NOT SURVIVE A CONVENTION FLOOR FIGHT. PARTY OFFICIALS FELT IT WAS IMPORTANT THAT COMMITTEE PRESENT A UNANIMOUSLY AGREED SLATE, AND OFFERED CHAIRMANSHIP TO STEEN IN EXCHANGE FOR ASSURANCE TO NORDLI.

5. CONVENTION ACCEPTED PROPOSAL WITH MORE RELIEF THAN ENTHUSIASM FOR IT WAS CLEAR THAT AN OPEN DEBATE OVER CONFIDENTIAL

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LEADERSHIP WOULD PROBABLY HURT LABOR'S ALREADY UNSTEADY SITUATION, ESPECIALLY AS IT FACES LOCAL ELECTIONS IN THE FALL.

6. FUNDAMENTAL QUESTION IS WHEN BRATTELI WILL RELINQUISH PRIME MINISTER POSITION TO NORDLI, AND IT IS NOT CLEAR NOW WHEN THAT WOULD BE. THIS ISSUE WAS HANDLED OPENLY IN CONVENTION BUT WITH SOME DISCRETION SINCE IT

IS PARTY CENTRAL COMMITTEE, NOT CONVENTION, WHICH HAS  
AUTHORITY TO DEAL WITH SUCH MATTERS. IT IS CLEAR THAT  
NORDLI'S HAND IN PARTY WOULD BE STRENGTHENED IF HE  
COULD ASSUME POSITION WELL BEFORE SEPTEMBER 1977  
NATIONAL ELECTION. CONVENTION'S DECISION AVOIDED  
POSSIBLE OPEN PARTY RIFT BUT QUESTION IS IF IT  
WILL PROVIDE THE BOOST THE PARTY NEEDS TO  
RECOVER ITS SAGGING POLITICAL SUPPORT IN MONTHS AHEAD.  
BYRNE

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